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ABSTRACT

Approximately 15 autistic and severely handicapped limited English or non-English proficient adults, 22 to 35 years old, attend 8 hours of classes a day at the University of Texas at El Paso. The students learn independent living skills, vocational, leisure, and social skills with instruction in both Spanish and English. Parent interviews assist in planning the learning program. Parents are instructed in why their children need to learn certain skills and how they can help at home. Teaching strategies include step-by-step photographs with bilingual directions and bilingual verbal cueing to teach cooking, social interactions, and other independent skills. College students and staff who teach in the program learn appropriate Spanish phrases. Examples of types of parent interview questions are included. (LFL)

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A UNIVERSITY PROGRAM PROVIDES SERVICES TO YOUNG ADULTS OF SEVERE HANDICAPS AND AUTISM WHO ARE OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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Runninghead: Limited English proficiency

A UNIVERSITY PROGRAM PROVIDES SERVICES TO YOUNG ADULTS OF SEVERE HANDICAPS AND AUTISM WHO ARE OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

The literature reports several teaching programs for persons who are training to teach mildly handicapped students of limited English competencies Baca 1984; Rodriquez 1984 and Ortiz, 1985. These teaching programs place emphasis on how teachers should have particular competencies in teaching students of mild handicaps who are also limited or non-English competencies. Presently, there is no literature or information which indicates how teachers should prepare to teach persons with autism and other severe handicaps who are of limited or non-English competencies. Also, there is no literature which specifically addresses how to teach students with autism and other severe handicaps of limited English competencies (Duran, 1984,) (Falvey, 1984).

This article will explain how a university program in the southwest has been developed to train young adults with autism and other severe handicaps who are also of limited or non-English competencies. Also, the article will explain how preservice teachers who may or may not speak English are prepared to teach these students. The first part of the article will describe a university program where adults with autism and other severe handicaps who are of limited or non-English competencies are being

instructed. The second part of the article will focus on how teachers who may know or do not know Spanish are trained in this university program to teach students with severe handicaps who are also of limited or non-English competencies.

Approximately fifteen adults with autism and other severe handicaps whose ages range from 22 to 35 are receiving educational training at the Universtiy of Texas at El Paso. As part of their activities which begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m. the adults with autism and other handicaps do several meaningful tasks daily. Some of these activities include independent skill training, vocational, leisure and social skill development. All of the clients in the Program who are of limited or non-English competencies are taught in Spanish and English. Many of the adults come from homes where only Spanish is spoken to them or come from homes where they hear only Spanish. In teaching these students or clients of limited or non-English competencies it is necessary to remember whether they are verbal or nonverbal that they need to hear or be taught or need cueing in Spanish in order to complete a task or steps in a task. In preliminary findings of a research project this writer is presently conducting in this University program and with two large school districts in the southwest, data are showing that with some non-English and limited English clients using Spanish only, or Spanish and English is fare more effective in teaching these populations than using English only Results of this research study are scheduled

to be completed and reported later this year.

How Are The Clients of Non-English or Limited English Competencies Taught Effectively In Spanish During Independent Skill Training?

In order to discover specific skills clients or adults need to learn the parents are interviewed by the staff and director of this Program. A checklist has been developed by this writer in order to learn what skills, clients may or may not need to learn Some examples of types of questions asked each parent appear below:

Preguntas Sobre Su Hija o Hijo En El Programa
(Questions concerning your sone or daughter in the Program)

1. Sabe su hijo o hija cocinar?
   (Does your son or daughter know how to cook?)
2. Permite a su hijo o hija que cocine?
   (Do you allow your son or daughter to cook?)
3. Sabe su hijo o hija labar su ropa?
   (Does your son or daughter know how to wash his or her own clothers?)
4. Puede su hijo o hija limpiarse si

mismo?

(Does your son or daughter know how to wash himself or herself?)

5. Sabe su hijo o hija vestirse?

(Does your son or daughter know how to dress himself or herself?)

6. Sabe su hijo o hja escojer su comida en un restaurante?

(Does your son or daughter know how to order his/her food in a restaurant?)

7. Sabe su hijo o hija comunicar en algura manera con usted (padre) y con los otros miembros de su familia?

(Does your son or daughter know how to communicate with your (parent) and or other members of your family.

8. Le dan oportunidades a su hijo o hija que vaya con usted o amigos o otros miembros de la familia al cine, ir de compras o tener otras actividades sociales?

(Do you give your son or daughter opportunities to do activities with others such as going to the movies, go shopping or have other opportunities

to do activities with other

individuals?)

After obtaining results from the questionaires it has been discovered by the writer of this article are staff at the ALL DAY AUTISM Program that many of Spanish speaking parents who send their sons and daughters to the university Program do not understand the necessity of their son or daughter learning to do many tasks for themselves. Further, this writer has discovered that many of the parents do not understand why their son or daughter should learn how to work competively? The writer of this article has, therefore, placed questions in the interview process (some were shown above) which will cause parents to begin understanding the importance of teaching their son or daughter to become more independent in various areas. According to Gold (1980) if parents are not involved thoroughly and from the beginning with the education of their sons or daughters they will not see fully the importance of teachng skills to their sons and or daughters they will not see fully the importance of teaching skills to their sons and or daughters in the home and other environments. After the questions are asked staff and director often take time to explain to many of the parents why their son or daughter needs to learn some various areas already emphasized in questions included in the interview process. Depending on parent's background and their willingness to be open to new ideas this instruction and conferencing with parents many take

from several weeks to several months. Once parents understand the value of what needs to be taught to their sons and daughters learning progresses now rapidly with the clients.

SOME TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADULTS WITH SEVERE HANDICAPS OF LIMITED OR NON-ENGLISH COMPETENCIES

The second phase of programming for these populations after parents have been interviewed involves using a variety of strategies to teach clients. Several ideas from the actual program's curricula will be discussed below.

1. Cooking and other Independent Skill Training

   All clients or students follow-pictures or photographs (step by step photgraphs of each step in the receipe are used) in order to cook or prepare any of their meals in the Program. For example, if clients are preparing tacos for their lunch they will follow a step by step picture or photograph of each step involved in preparing tacos. Under each picture or photograph directions are written in Spanish and English. This helps staff members and college practicum students to know exactly how to verbally cue clients in both languages if client forgets any steps in the sequence or chain. The first photograph may indicate, "Tacos para

comer." ("Tacos ready to eat.") An exact set of the same photographs for each receipe prepared for the client in the University Program is also used by each of them at home. Parents are taught in the conference sessions how to help their son or daughter use photographs with minimal use of verbal cueing.

2. Leisure and Recreation. As with other activities just described, in the area of leisure and recreation there should also be an emphasis in giving verbal instructions to clients in Spanish and English. For example, if clients are learning to do warm-up exercises brisk and short phrased directions such as, "Levantence" (Get Up).. "Brazos arriba, ("Arms Up"), or "Todos juntos" (All Together) should be indicated to clients. Verbal directions should be accompanied by modeling and demonstration whenever possible.

3. Social Skill Activities. This writer of this paper has also learned that clients of limited or non-English speaking competencies especially need instruction first in Spanish *

then English in the area of social skill instruction. Part of the reason for this Spanish and English emphasis in social skill development is because clients see and learn first much of what their families do and say at home. This writer visited the homes of several of the clients in the University Program and discovered that the majority of social interactions which were taking place among family members were done completely in Spanish. The family members asked their sons and daughter how they were and how they were feeling in Spanish. Some English was also used but less frequently than was Spanish. In some of the homes only Spanish was used to ask questions or to communicate to their sons and or daughters. In each case the clients responded if they were verbal in Spanish or nodded their heads or gestured if non-verbal. Thus, staff members of the University Program asked the clients similar questions in Spanish or Spanish and English. By observing closely the clients in their homes and bringing similar cueing of other environments a greater amount of generaliza-

tion occured among each of the clients Gold (1976) notes that the key to successful instruction with these populations is to teach the students in several environments so that the students will generalize or transfer their learning consistently across environments.

HOW ARE COLLEGE STUDENTS AND STAFF TRAINED AT THE UNIVERSITY PROGRAM TO TEACH NON-ENGLISH OR LIMITED ENGLISH POPULATIONS?

As with all programs the curriculum can only be as effective as staff or preservice teachers are trained to work effectively with the clients. According to Ortiz (1985) good curricular programming for these populations must include careful planning and daily evaluation in order to see if all important areas have been emphasized. Before college students begin a practicum in the All Day Autism Program other supervisors whose first language is Spanish and who taught in the Program previously show new college students who may or may not speak Spanish words or phrases in Spanish. These words or phrases will be used to teach each of the clients throughout the day. Each supervisor models the words in Spanish. The college student repeats in Spanish what the supervisor has just said out loud. This procedure is continued until the supervisor feels that new trainees or college students can say new phrases or words in Spanish. In each case the supervisor also asks new students what

the meaning of words and phrases are before training with each new colleges student has been completed The writer of this article has noted that such training of new practicum students in assisting them to learn new words and phrases in Spanish helps college students and staff members better understand what they are going to verbally are or say to their non-English clients. Also, helping college students learn words and phrases in Spanish will additionally assist preservice students to better practice the language of clients that he or she will be using the very near future.

In conclusion, comprehensive proramming for persons with autism and other severe handicaps who are limited or non-English competencies requires utilizing Spanish and English throughout the client's instruction. Also, programming for these populations necesitates that staff and practicum students become aware of the client's home in order to better phrase the questionning and instruction which is done in the client's or students of non-English or limited English competencies who also have severe handicaps requires that staff and others involved in teaching the clients learn some words and or phrases in the client's native language.

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